



Town of Groton, Connecticut

45 Fort Hill Road
Groton, CT 06340-4394
Town Clerk 860-441-6640
Town Manager
860-441-6630

Meeting Minutes

Representative Town Meeting

Moderator Jean-Claude Ambroise, Representatives Karin Adams, Scott W. Aument, Sr., Joseph Baril, Nancy E. Barnhart, Alicia Bauer, Genevieve Cerf, Susan Chase-Hildebrand, Michael Collins, Christine Conley, Susan Deane-Shinbrot, Luanne E. DeMatto, Nancy Driscoll, Dave Ferreira, Neal Gardner, Patrice Granatosky, Lorraine M. Greubel, Karen Hatcher, Keith L. Hedrick, Conrad F. Heede, Lynn Crockett Hubbard, Michael Dean Johnson, Rosanne E. Kotowski, Jim Loughlin, Jackie Massett, Bruce A. McDermott, Roscoe Merritt, Scott Newsome, Richard J. Pasqualini, Jr., Betty A. Prochaska, Pam Ryley, Jack Sebastian, Dana S. Semeraro, Richard Semeraro, Joan Steinfeld, Irma Streeter, Mark Svencer, Archie C. Swindell, Lori A. Watrous, Amanda L. Whewell and Ivy R. Williams

Wednesday, January 9, 2013

7:30 PM

Groton Senior Center

REGULAR MEETING

A. ROLL CALL

Moderator Jean-Claude Ambroise called the meeting to order at 7:35 p.m.

29 members were present, and a quorum was declared.

The Moderator reported that Reps. Deane-Shinbrot, Driscoll, Hatcher, Loughlin and McDermott notified the Town Clerk of their absence.

Members Present: Moderator Ambroise, Rep. Adams, Rep. Aument, Rep. Baril, Rep. Barnhart, Rep. Bauer, Rep. Cerf, Rep. Chase-Hildebrand, Rep. Collins, Rep. Conley, Rep. Ferreira, Rep. Gardner, Rep. Granatosky, Rep. Greubel, Rep. Hedrick, Rep. Heede, Rep. Kotowski, Rep. Massett, Rep. Merritt, Rep. Pasqualini Jr., Rep. Ryley, Rep. D. Semeraro, Rep. Sebastian, Rep. R. Semeraro, Rep. Steinfeld, Rep. Streeter, Rep. Swindell, Rep. Watrous and Rep. Williams

Members Absent: Rep. Deane-Shinbrot, Rep. DeMatto, Rep. Driscoll, Rep. Hatcher, Rep. Hubbard, Rep. Johnson, Rep. Loughlin, Rep. McDermott, Rep. Newsome, Rep. Prochaska, Rep. Svencer and Rep. Whewell

Also present were Town Manager Mark Oefinger, Assistant Superintendent of Schools Sean McKenna, Director of Buildings & Grounds William Robarge, Director of Public Works Gary Schneider, City Mayor Marian Galbraith, Town Clerk Betsy Moukawsher and Assistant Town Clerk Sally Whitney.

B. MOMENT OF SILENCE AND SALUTE TO THE FLAG

The members observed a moment of silence followed by the Salute to the Flag led by Rep. Greubel.

C. APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF DECEMBER 12, 2012

A motion that the minutes be approved was made by Rep. Pasqualini, seconded by Rep. Ferreira and so voted unanimously.

In response to Rep. Aument, Town Clerk Moukawsher confirmed that the correction requested to the October 10, 2012 minutes was made.

D. CITIZENS' PETITIONS

Michael Boucher, 16 Hillside Avenue, expressed his concern regarding the lack of transparency in regard to the proceedings for the sale of Thames Valley Communications and the financial ramifications for City taxpayers. He requested that the Town review the proceedings of the sale and support a financial investigation of the City and Groton Utilities. He asked that a study group be formed to review the City and Groton Utilities budgets.

E. RECEPTION OF COMMUNICATIONS

Moderator Jean-Claude Ambroise introduced Lorraine Greubel who was elected at a District 1

caucus prior to the meeting to fill the vacancy due to the resignation of Dee Harrell.

The Moderator announced that Town Historian Jim Streeter will host an event on Groton Landmarks on Friday, January 11, 2013 at the Groton Congregational Church.

He reported that he has no update regarding the Mayor's Revenue Task Force.

The Moderator clarified that an administrative error was made on this meeting's agenda regarding the placement of the report by City Mayor Marian Galbraith. He recognized Mayor Galbraith and stated that she will be discussing the fiduciary relationship between the Town and the City and will address questions about the sale of Thames Valley Communications (TVC). He made available a transcript of the December 17, 2012 City Council minutes that provides answers to many of the questions regarding the City Council's action on the sale. He requested that members' questions be appropriate to the responsibility of the RTM as granted in the Town Charter.

REPORT OF CITY MAYOR MARIAN GALBRAITH

City Mayor Marian Galbraith presented an extensive chronological report on the development and current status of TVC. She identified the financial liabilities of Groton Utilities. She noted that there is no financial impact or responsibility for the Town. She explained the reasons for the City Council's decision to sell TVC and noted that Groton Utilities is a separate entity with no effect on the City Police or Highway budget requests.

In response to Rep. Cerf, the Mayor reiterated the reasons for Groton Utilities' decision to invest in the development of TVC. She noted that all current commitments to existing TVC customers will be honored by a new owner.

In response to Rep. Gardner, the Mayor stated that the final decision regarding the sale of TVC should be finalized by the end of this week.

2012-0321 Reallocation of CIP Funds to Fitch High School Roof Replacement

This matter was Referred to the RTM Education Committee, due back on February 13, 2013.

F. REPORT OF THE TOWN MANAGER

1. Financial report

Mr. Oefinger reported that the Fund Balance as of December 31, 2012 is approximately \$9.3 million; the General Contingency balance is \$444,400; the Capital Reserve balance is \$1,267,906. The Manager noted that the decrease in the Capital Reserve balance is attributable to the \$200,000 for the Fitch High School Roof Replacement project that was approved by the Town Council and is being referred to the RTM at this meeting.

2. Monthly briefing

The Town Manager highlighted various items from the Town Manager's News.

Rep. Sebastian requested a report from the Town Manager on what he is doing to save the taxpayers money in the next budget.

In response to Rep. Pasqualini, the Manager commented on the status of the Mystic Streetscape project and stated that no decision has been made by the Town Council regarding the use of the accumulating fines that are being charged to the contractor for delays in completing the project.

The Manager noted that he will review and provide information on the final outcome of the window replacement problem at Fitch High School.

The Manager noted that daily discussions are ongoing with Pfizer concerning the changes at the

Groton location.

In response to Rep. Cerf, the Manager noted that he is assembling the CIP projects for the FYE2014 budget, and stated that paving is now funded by the ordinance that was approved in November.

In response to Rep. Aument, the Manager confirmed that Phase 2 of the Mystic Streetscape will go out to bid in the spring and that he hopes construction can begin in the fall.

G. REPORT OF THE SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS

Assistant School Superintendent Sean McKenna introduced the new Director of Buildings & Grounds William Robarge.

Mr. Robarge informed the members of the various security measures that have been implemented and provided information on future changes to security that will be made in a two-phase program in light of the Newtown tragedy.

Mr. McKenna reported that the current enrollment figure is 4,739, and that approximately 18 percent of students will be affected by the redistricting plan.

In response to a question posed by Rep. Kotowski, a POINT OF ORDER was raised by Rep. Massett under RTM rule 3.4 that a member shall rise to address the Chair. The Moderator asked Rep. Kotowski to rise and ask her question.

Mr. McKenna replied that security upgrades are needed at ten schools and the administration building.

In response to Rep. Ferreira, Mr. Robarge reviewed the use and locations of panic buttons, annunciators, and sirens at the entrances and exits of school buildings.

In response to comments from Rep. Cerf, a POINT OF ORDER was raised by Rep. Merritt that the comments are out of order, since the RTM is responsible for discussing funding, not for banning assault weapons.

The Moderator instructed Rep. Cerf that he will allow her to continue only if she restricts her comments to fiduciary matters.

Rep. Cerf asserted that schools need protection and explained that citizens are going to have to pay for the irresponsibility of others.

POINT OF ORDER was raised by Rep. Steinfeld that the remarks are deviating from the subject. The Moderator ruled in favor of the point of order and requested Rep. Cerf to refrain from further comments.

Mr. Robarge commented that \$300,000 in unexpended funds is available in the current budget which will be used to pay for Phase 1 security measures.

Rep. Kotowski requested that the specific source of the \$300,000 be identified.

Mr. McKenna stated he will provide that information at the next meeting.

H. LIAISON REPORTS

Board of Education/Town & City Councils/RTM Liaison Committee

Rep. Massett noted that the committee met prior to this meeting, but due to the lateness of the hour and the necessity for completing other items of business, she requested that her report be deferred until next month.

I. COMMITTEE REPORTS

1. FINANCE - Chairman Granatosky

No meeting, no report.

2. COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT & SERVICES - Chairman Ferreira

No meeting, no report.

3. EDUCATION - Chairman Hedrick

No meeting, no report.

4. RECREATION - Chairman Streeter

No meeting, no report.

5. PUBLIC SAFETY - Chairman Pasqualini

No meeting, no report.

Rep. Cerf left at this point in the meeting.

6. PUBLIC WORKS - Chairman Collins

Chairman Collins read the minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday, January 9, 2013. (Minutes are attached to the permanent record.)

Motion to approve the minutes was made by Rep. Collins, seconded by Rep. Hedrick and so voted unanimously.

2012-0314 Crystal Lake Road Reconstruction Project - CIP Reallocation

RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE REALLOCATION OF \$20,300 FROM THE POQUONNOCK ROAD SIDEWALK PROJECT TO A NEW FYE13 CIP PROJECT FOR THE CRYSTAL LAKE ROAD RECONSTRUCTION PROJECT

WHEREAS, the Town is responsible for 10% of the project cost and the state has estimated the current Town match for preliminary engineering for the Crystal Lake Road Reconstruction Project to be \$63,620, and

WHEREAS, these funds will need to be available when the Town signs the agreement with the State, and

WHEREAS, authorized in the FYE12 Capital Improvement Program budget was \$34,000 for the local match, and

WHEREAS, remaining in a FYE09 Capital Improvement Program is \$36,338.34 for a recently completed project to remove ledge and construct an asphalt sidewalk on Poquonnock Road, now therefore be it

RESOLVED, that the Town Council authorizes reallocation of \$20,300 from account number 50108 5522E (Poquonnock Road Sidewalk) to a new FYE13 CIP project for the Crystal Lake Road Reconstruction.

Refer to RTM.

A motion was made by Rep. Collins, seconded by Rep. Steinfeld, that this matter be Adopted for January 9, 2013.

Members discussed the Department of Transportation's estimated project cost, State and federal reimbursements, and the Town's ten percent contribution for the project.

The motion carried by the following vote:

Votes: In Favor: 26 - Moderator Ambroise, Rep. Adams, Rep. Aument, Rep. Baril, Rep. Barnhart, Rep. Bauer, Rep. Chase-Hildebrand, Rep. Collins, Rep. Conley, Rep. Ferreira, Rep. Granatosky, Rep. Greubel, Rep. Hedrick, Rep. Heede, Rep. Kotowski, Rep. Massett, Rep. Merritt, Rep. Pasqualini Jr., Rep. Ryley, Rep. D. Semeraro, Rep. R. Semeraro, Rep. Steinfeld, Rep. Streeter, Rep. Swindell, Rep. Watrous and Rep. Williams
Opposed: 2 - Rep. Gardner and Rep. Sebastian
Non-voting: 1 - Rep. Cerf

7. RULES & PROCEDURES - Chairman Massett

No meeting, no report.

Motion to adjourn

A motion to adjourn was made by Rep. Massett and seconded by Rep. Sebastian.

POINT OF ORDER was raised by Rep. Aument that the motion to adjourn circumvents the body's order of business on this agenda.

The Moderator ruled in favor of the Point of Order and opened the floor to budget discussion.

J. BUDGET DISCUSSIONS

In response to Rep. Gardner, the Town Manager commented on the future loss of Pfizer revenue as it pertains to the grand list. The grand list is not growing as it did in the past, but is not stagnant. He cautioned members against making comments that suggest that Groton is in decline due to Pfizer business decisions and to refrain from pessimistic remarks that may affect our community's future. The Manager acknowledged that investments are being made in Electric Boat and in other existing Pfizer structures. He reported that Economic Development is receiving inquiries from businesses. Mr. Oefinger suggested that more concern should be directed toward funding decisions on the State level that will affect municipalities.

K. OTHER BUSINESS

None.

L. ADJOURNMENT

A motion to adjourn at 9:45 p.m. was made by Rep. Pasqualini, seconded by Rep. Adams and so voted unanimously.

Attest:

*Betsy Moukawsher, Town Clerk
Clerk of the RTM*

Sally A. Whitney, Assistant Town Clerk